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THE ANTI-MASONIC PARTY

A study of political
influences and
their effect
upon Freemasonry

THE ANTI-MASONIC PARTY

FOREWORD

The thought of the whole world is just now in a state of unrest and uncertainty. Men are groping in the dark, seeking to find the way to a truer definition of Brotherhood. Because there is no uniformity of opinion as to the true direction, we are invited to abandon the charts which have guided the course of civilization during the centuries, and rely upon new ones, which, it is fatuously claimed by those who have drafted them, will bring us safely into port.

The methods which Freemasonry uses to promote the Brotherhood of Man are time-tried and tested, and those who believe that we should enter into activities outside the avowed purposes of the Fraternity, as expressed in its fundamental documents, should beware lest they be the cause of humanity laying at our doorstep a bill for damage done to the Cause of Human Brotherhood, which thinking members will be loath to pay.

For these reasons, the application of the story of the Anti-Masonic Party should be brought out very clearly, and the strongest possible plea should be made by every speaker for a militant Masonry which will bring home to the American People, through our membership, the civic application of those fundamental principles upon which Humanity, the success of our Republican form of government, and the perpetuity of our Fraternity itself, depend for their very existence.

The formation of the Anti-Masonic Party was a sequel to the Morgan Affair, which was the subject of Masonic Service Association Bulletin No. 9.

Fraternally submitted,

THE EXECUTIVE COMMISSION,
By Geo. L. Schoonover,
Educational Director.

October, 1922.

THE ANTI-MASONIC PARTY

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1. For a more complete account of the Anti-Masonic Party see: Eriksson, "The Anti-Masonic Party"; **The Builder,** v. 7, pp. 71-77; Gibbs, "The Anti-Masonic Movement"; **The Builder,** v. 4, pp. 341-348; Bulletin No. 9, Masonic Service Association.

2. Brown, **A Narrative of the Anti-Masonick Excitement in the Western Part of the State of New York During the Years 1826-7-8 and a Part of 1829.** Batavia, N. Y., 1829, pp. 15-38.

3. Brown, **op. cit.,** pp. 38-50.

4. Seward, **Autobiography,** pp. 69-70. Brown, **op. cit.,** pp. 38-47.

5. Brown, **op. cit.,** pp. 47-50; Weed, **Autobiography,** pp. 231-237, 270-273, 319, 332-335; Craftsman, v. 1, (May 26, 1829), p. 122; Huntington, **True History of the Morgan Abduction,** pp. 57-104, passim.; Robertson, **History of Freemasonry in Canada,** Vol. II, chapter 7, pp. 121-140.

6. Gibbs, **op. cit.** The Builder, Vol. 4, pp. 345-346.

7. Gould, **History of Freemasonry,** v. 4, pp. 327-328; Craftsman, v. 1, (March 24, November 3, 1829), pp. 49, 307; Gibbs, **op. cit.,** pp. 346-347.

8. Gibbs, **op. cit.** The Builder, Vol. 4, pp. 345-346.

9. Brown, **op. cit.,** p. 15.

10. Bernard, **Light on Masonry,** pp. 419-420. A statement of a convention of seceding Masons held at Le Roy, N. Y., Feb. 19-20 and July 4-5, 1828, testifying to the accuracy of Morgan's work.

11. Gibbs, **op. cit.** The Builder, Vol. 4, p. 346.

12. McCarthy, "The Anti-Masonic Party"; **Annual Report of the American Historical Association for 1902,** Vol. 1, pp. 369, 371. This authority holds that the Morgan affair was merely an incident in the formation of the Anti-Masonic Party. He says, "The Morgan mystery has received its share of attention, and historians have put it down as the main cause of this peculiar political organization; in fact, it is the practice of even profound historians to call the Anti-Masonic party merely an

outgrowth of the mysterious disappearance of William Morgan. Americans are prone to create a political party out of anything, but a moment's reflection should convince us that a party having for its leaders men like Thurlow Weed and Thaddeus Stevens must have had its basis in underlying causes and must have been founded on stronger reasons than those which present themselves at a casual glance. A review of the political situation at the beginning of the period we have been considering reveals us soil well prepared for political strife."

13. Ibid., pp. 369, 370.

14. Ibid., see chapters under state heading for details. Tillotson, **Ancient Craft Masonry in Vermont**, chap. VII, The Anti-Masonic Period, pp. 78-147.

15. Ibid., pp. 540-543; Craftsman, v. 1, (February 17, November 17, 1829), pp. 12, 324; Gould, **op. cit.**, pp. 327, 328.

16. Ibid., pp. 548-549. The most active of the leaders were Thurlow Weed, William H. Seward, Albert Tracy, William H. Maynard, Francis Granger, Fred Whittlesey, John C. Spencer, Myron Holley, Henry D. Ward, Millard Fillmore and Thaddeus Stevens.

17. Ibid., pp. 549, 550; Giddins, **Anti-Masonic Almanac**, v. 4, p. 45.

18. Seward, **op. cit.**, pp. 76-79.

19. Stanwood, **History of the Presidency**, v. 1, p. 156; Weed, **op. cit.**, pp. 385-391; **Nile's Register**, v. 41, (1831), pp. 83-85, 166-174.

Wirt, in an address sent to the Anti-Masonic convention on September 28, 1831, stated that early in life he had been initiated into the Masonic order, but that he had not attended a lodge for more than thirty years. Speaking of the Masonry opposed by the Anti-Masons, he said, "But, gentlemen, this was not, and could not be Masonry as understood by Washington. The thing is impossible. The suspicion would be parricide, nor can I believe that in the quarter of the union with which I am acquainted, intelligent men of high and honorable character, if they have been drawn into these shocking and impious oaths, can consider them as paramount to their duties to God and their country. It is true that after the practical exhibition of Masonry which we have had in New York, no man of common prudence can

sleep over these discoveries, and will take care in every case of doubt to inquire. But both justice and prudence demand discrimination, for the powers of a president ought not, in my opinion to be prostituted to the purpose of a blind and mighty proscription, involving innocence and honor with guilt and treason, and no man is worthy of a nomination to this high office in whose judgment and patriotism, confidence cannot be placed to make the proper distinction between them. In the view of all honorable men he would deservedly become an object of disgust, if he could stoop to commit himself to any pledges, in a case like this, as the price of his nomination.

"If with these views of my opinion, it is the pleasure of your convention to change the nomination, I can assure you sincerely that I shall retire from it with far more pleasure than I should accept it. If, on the contrary, it be their choice to abide by it, I have only to add, that in a government like ours, I consider no citizen at liberty to reject a nomination by so respectable a body, upon personal considerations."

This was strange and unusual language for an Anti-Mason to use. After hearing the address read, the convention voted unanimously to stand by Wirt's nomination.

20. McCarthy, **op. cit.**, pp. 534, 535; **Washington Globe**, October 1, 1831; August 25, October 13, October 27, 1832; Stanwood, **op. cit.**, p. 163, Kennedy, **Memoirs of Wm. Wirt**, pp. 365-369.

In the winter following his nomination, Wirt became seriously ill with erysipelas produced by a cold. This combined with his age made him unfit to conduct any active campaign. He was discouraged by his failure to unite the opponents of the Jackson administration and would have withdrawn had other Anti-Masonic leaders consented. In a letter to a friend, Judge Carr, dated January 12, 1832, he said, "My only motive was an honorable and patriotic one. It justified me in permitting the nomination to be made. But this having been done, the National Republicans having declared against the union, which alone I had in view, I can perceive, as I have said, neither dignity nor decency in continuing the nomination."

He pointed out the hopelessness of success and stated that his continuance in the field would expose him and his party to ridicule.

The Anti-Masons were weak in Ohio so their electoral ticket in this state was withdrawn in 1832, and the party members urged to vote for Clay. This coali-

tion was denounced by the **Washington Globe,** the organ of General Jackson, in the following language, "Thus have the leading Anti-Masons bargained and sold their whole party to the Grand Royal Arch Mason, Henry Clay! Will the people who compose this party ratify this sale by their leaders? It is not only their votes but their principles which are bargained away! They are required to support a Royal Arch Mason for the Presidency, in violation of the fundamental principle of their organization."

In order to compensate (as the Globe claimed) the Anti-Masons for their action in Ohio, the Clay electoral ticket was withdrawn in Pennsylvania, and the Clay supporters there were urged to vote for Wirt.

A coalition of the two anti-Jackson parties was also formed in New York. The Anti-Masons held a state convention on June 21, 1832, at Utica, drew up a state and electoral ticket and endorsed the nominations of Wirt and Ellmaker. The National Republicans held their state convention shortly after, and, though endorsing Clay and Sergeant for president and vice-president, adopted the Anti-Masonic state and electoral ticket. "This," said Thurlow Weed, the Anti-Masonic leader, "subjected us to considerable embarassment. We were styled by the Jackson men throughout the canvass the 'Siamese Twin party.' The people were told that of necessity, somebody would be cheated."

21. Gibbs, **op. cit.,** The Builder, Vol. 4, p. 348. Declaration of Masons of Boston and Vicinity, Dec. 31, 1831.

22. McCarthy, **op. cit.,** pp. 546-548.

The following is an illustration of one interpretation of the outline. It is hoped that each speaker will develop his own talk, thereby making it a personal message.

THE ANTI-MASONIC PARTY

The Morgan Incident.

On September 12, 1826, occurred an event which was to have far-reaching effect on the Masonic fraternity—the kidnapping of William Morgan by certain irresponsible parties who were alleged to be Masons. Morgan was known as a member of the Fraternity, though we have no record of where he took his Symbolic degrees. He was a resident of Batavia, New York, and held a membership in Western Star Chapter, No. 33, at Le Roy, N. Y. Certain brethren of Batavia wished to form a chapter there and circulated a petition which was presented to Morgan and signed by him. Before this petition for a chapter was presented to the Grand Chapter of New York, some of the signers, who were familiar with the character and reputation of Morgan, decided they did not want to affiliate with him in this capacity, and circulated a new petition which he was not invited to sign. When the chapter was finally instituted and he discovered that he had been omitted, he became very angry and quarreled with some of the brethren who were responsible for his omission. Inspired by a desire to gain revenge, he later let it be known that he intended to publish the secrets of Freemasonry, using the newspaper office owned by a friend for that purpose. Responsibility for the events which followed this announcement has never been definitely placed, but it is established that his house was searched and efforts were made to burn the publishing plant referred to. Soon afterward Morgan was arrested on a charge of petit lar-

ceny and lodged in jail at Canandaigua, a town near Batavia. He was released the next evening; but was immediately overpowered by several men in waiting, who then transported him in a closed carriage to Fort Niagara, where he was confined in the fort's abandoned magazine. Here definite information concerning Morgan ceases. He disappeared, and his fate is as much a mystery now as it was in 1826.

Morgan's disappearance was seized upon by enemies of the Masonic fraternity as a basis for an effort to discredit it. Accusations were made that Morgan had been murdered or drowned in the Niagara River by Masons. A body found on the shore of Lake Ontario was first identified to be Morgan's but was afterwards proved to be that of Timothy Monro, a Canadian. Investigations were held and trials of accused Masons were conducted. As a result, six Masons were convicted for participation in Morgan's abduction, and sentenced to jail for periods ranging from one month to two years and four months. No one was ever convicted of Morgan's murder. Confessions were later made by three men who claimed to have participated in the drowning of Morgan, but these have been discredited.

The Morgan affair created great excitement in Western New York, and much feeling was aroused against the institution of Freemasonry, which, in the public mind, was held responsible for the abduction. The most significant results of this excitement were social. Masons were persecuted and many of them weakened under the fires of denunciation and ostracism, and some renounced the Order. Members of the Fraternity were denied church privileges by a number of denominations. Masonic preachers were driven from their pulpits and children of Masons were turned out of the schools. Laws were passed prohibiting Masons from sitting on juries, it being held that their Masonic obligations disqualified them from doing their duty as jurors in rendering honest and unbiased opinions.

Masonic work was impeded and remained practically at a standstill for a number of years. Many lodges surrendered their charters, and some of the Grand Lodges discontinued their activities for a time. However, faithful members kept the work alive, and after the excitement died down in the late thirties, the Fraternity resumed its labors and became more prosperous than ever.

Rise of the Party in the Various States.

Following the close of the War of 1812, the once powerful Federalist Party disappeared, chiefly due to the weak support given to measures for the war against Great Britain. The old Republican Party survived, and in 1820 elected Monroe to the presidency without any opposition—an event which is unique in American political annals. This harmonious election gave rise to the expression that the period was an "era of good feeling"; and while true in a general sense, there was anything but good feeling among the various political leaders of the time. Voters gave their adherence to various individuals, and became known as "Adams men," "Jackson men," "Clay men," "Calhounites," and "Clintonians." All of these groups were Republicans, each believing that its leader was the best exponent of the Republican principles of Jefferson. The election of 1824 was famous for the contest among the Republican leaders, Adams, Jackson, Clay, Crawford, Clinton and Calhoun. John Quincy Adams was the successful candidate.

After the 1824 election, the various Republican elements took issues on the great questions of the day, among them the Bank, the Tariff and Internal Improvements. Two parties arose—the National-Republicans under Adams

and Clay, and the Democratic-Republicans, later called the Jacksonian Democrats, under Andrew Jackson. The Jackson party won in the campaigns of 1828 and 1832. The opposing party, the National-Republicans, gradually became the new Whig Party, exerting an influence in American politics from 1832 to 1836.

The agitation and excitement caused by the Morgan affair gave rise to an organized political movement which during the campaign of 1832 became known as the Anti-Masonic Party. In one sense Morgan's disappearance was merely an incident in the formation of this party. It was the match which lighted the fires of political anti-Masonry, and by itself the incident might never have brought such a party into being. Social and political conditions afforded the opportunity.

On the other hand, conditions were ripe for the formation of a new political party. Those who wanted to serve their purposes by bringing a new party into being were actuated by selfish motives, and were unscrupulous as to method. They knew the power of excitement to unite men into a group, and the Morgan Affair was seized upon by them as a method of fomenting the hatred necessary for the accomplishment of their ends.

But had there been no Morgan abduction, their energies would have forced them to use some other occurrence as an excuse. Had not misguided and ignorant Masons acted upon the spur of the moment, our enemies could not have attacked the Fraternity, or charged it with their crime. Freemasonry does not uphold the criminal, nor has it any responsibility for the acts of these men. Yet the account was entered by the public in our name, and we were asked to pay.

For half a century we did pay. We paid in humiliation and disgrace. Freemasonry became dormant—almost died. These effects

were to a large extent external. But we paid in internal efficiency, too, in ways that will be shown later on.

The Development of Political Anti-Masonry.

The development of political anti-Masonry during this period is an interesting and instructive story. It had its beginning in western New York in February, 1827, only five months after the disappearance of Morgan. Meetings were held at Batavia and other nearby towns and steps were taken to prevent the election of Masons to office. The organization thus begun spread rapidly with Rochester as its center. Little success was attained in the election of 1827, but in 1828 the anti-Masons succeeded in electing 17 assemblymen and 4 state senators. The party attained its greatest strength in New York in 1830, when its adherents came within about 9000 votes of electing their candidate for governor. The leading genius of anti-Masonry in New York was Thurlow Weed, a political boss of great experience, and to whom is attributed the statement that the dead body at Oak Orchard was "a good enough Morgan until after the election."

In Pennsylvania, the anti-Masonic propaganda found fertile soil among the various German sects, as well as among the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians and the Quakers. In the western part of the state there was a discontent with the administration of affairs by the Democratic-Republican state officials. The widening circle of political activities commenced to reveal itself in Pennsylvania in 1827, the anti-Masonic party attaining its greatest strength in 1835. In that year it elected 9 state senators, and all but 28 of the lower house were either Whigs or anti-Masons. Joseph Ritner was elected as an anti-Masonic governor in 1835. Among the leaders of the party in Pennsylvania, Thaddeus Stevens stands out as the foremost of them all,

his strenuous efforts holding the party together during the early part of its decline.

Vermont was a stronghold of anti-Masonry but this was of little significance in national political circles because of the small electoral vote of the state. However, Vermont was the only state carried by William Wirt, the anti-Masonic candidate for president, in 1832. The party also succeeded in electing its candidate for governor in that year.

New York, Pennsylvania and Vermont were the states in which the anti-Masonic movement reached its greatest height; but it also appeared in Alabama, Michigan Territory, North Carolina, Maryland, New Jersey, Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. In all of these, however, it was comparatively weak.

Development of the National Party.

As already noted, there was but one dominant political party in the United States, the Democratic-Republican. However, the various sections of the country, East, West, and South, were becoming conscious of the fact that their economic and social interests were fundamentally different. These conditions, existing more or less underneath the surface, made the formation of a new party a comparatively easy matter.

Religious conditions, also, exerted a powerful influence in the formation of the anti-Masonic party. From 1820 to 1840 was a period of marked social unrest and an important manifestation of this unrest was found in religious activity. Zealous religionists were easily misled by the propaganda of the anti-Masons, and entered the ranks of that party. It became to all intents and purposes a religious party, the movement against the Masons attaining all the fanaticism of a religious crusade. No organization—civil, military or religious—was without

the pale of its influence. It will thus be seen that Freemasons engaged in a life struggle for the defense of their beloved Fraternity. As has been related, a considerable number of brethren renounced the Fraternity, its labors were misinterpreted, its motives challenged and its purposes hindered and delayed. But it did not remain undefended. Writers and speakers came to the aid of the Order, while many of its members openly defended the principles for which it stood and entered the political arena in an effort to stem the tide. The anti-Masons seized this opening and accused Masonic politicians of attempting to subvert the government. Laws forbidding Masons to hold meetings or perform their rites were introduced and every possible effort made to destroy the Fraternity.

Political Campaign of 1828 and 1832.

It is evident that the plans of the leaders of the anti-Masonic party were ambitious and far reaching from the beginning. There is evidence to show that as early at 1827 they were making plans for a national organization. One great difficulty which they experienced was finding a suitable leader. In 1828 members of the party generally supported John Quincy Adams for the presidency, in opposition to Andrew Jackson, for Adams had declared himself against Masonry. In seeking for a presidential candidate in the campaign of 1832, several men were considered. Adams was eliminated because of his unpopularity in New York. John C. Calhoun was unacceptable because of his advocacy of nullification in South Carolina. They would not accept Henry Clay because he would not renounce the Fraternity of which he was a member, and a past grand master of Kentucky.

In an attempt to unite on a suitable candidate, the anti-Masons held two national conventions. The first met in Philadelphia, September 11, 1830, the call for the convention coming

from New York. Ninety-six delegates were present from ten states and Michigan Territory. They nominated no candidates, but prepared an address to the people which was given widest publicity and voted to hold another convention in Baltimore. On September 26, 1831, this second convention assembled with one hundred fifteen delegates present from fifteen states. John McLean, judge of the Supreme Court, was considered a candidate for president, but withdrew his name upon learning that the National Republicans intended to nominate Henry Clay. Finally on September 28th the anti-Masons nominated William Wirt of Maryland for president and Amos W. Ellmaker of Pennsylvania for vice-president. The convention did not draw up a formal platform, but prepared another address to the people, denouncing Freemasonry and urging the election of the party candidates.

From the anti-Masonic viewpoint, the election of 1832 was a dismal failure. The opposition to Jackson was divided between Clay and Wirt, which itself made success for the anti-Masons impossible. Wirt wished to withdraw from the campaign, but party leaders prevented him. In various states coalitions were formed between the National Republicans and the anti-Masons; but the Democrats gained an overwhelming victory. Jackson received over 687,502 votes while Clay and Wirt combined were able to muster only 530,189. In the Electoral College the defeat was even more pronounced—Jackson receiving 219 electoral votes, Clay 49 and Wirt only the 7 electoral votes of Vermont. It is evident from these figures that the influence of the campaign of villification had begun to wane.

The Decline of the Party.

After the election of 1832, the anti-Masonic party rapidly declined as a factor in both state

and national politics. In New York, the election of 1833 resulted in a sweeping victory for the Democrats, and the next year the anti-Masonic party merged with the National Republicans to form the Whig party. The same thing happened in Pennsylvania in 1836, and by 1838 the anti-Masons had been practically absorbed by the Whigs throughout the states in which they had been active. The party retained its national identity until 1838. In 1835 its convention nominated William Henry Harrison, who was also the Whig candidate for president in 1836. In 1838 the anti-Masons held their last convention, delegates being present from New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio only. They nominated the Whig candidates, Harrison and Tyler, thus in effect completing the merger with the Whig party.

Reasons for Failure of the Anti-Masonic Party.

The reasons for the failure of the anti-Masonic party are not hard to seek. It had been founded by politicians anxious to advance their own interests and willing to lay hold of any issue for their purpose. In a way, the campaign was the last echo of that spirit of bigotry and intolerance which some two centuries earlier had burned witches at the stake, and in New England had driven Roger Williams from the Coast settlement. The persecution of Masons had become so bitter and the speaking campaigns of the renouncing Masons so ludicrous that a reaction was inevitable. Men began to judge Freemasonry somewhat by the conduct of those who had remained loyal. They were of good report. They were prudent in their conduct and dignified in the addresses which they put forth in defense of the principles of Masonry. The fires of political antagonism cooled off, and presently it was found that the real secrets of Freemasonry were still safely lodged in the repository of faithful breasts.

Once again there were found attentive ears to listen to the instructive tongue. Fires had burned away the false pride of those who had been inclined to brag about the accomplishments of the great men in the Fraternity, but the rugged, sterling principles of Freemasonry stood forth unscarred and uncharred in the trial by fire.

Herein we find the kernel of the reason for the failure of the anti-Masonic party. It was conceived in opportunism, and its appeal for support was based on hatred and opposition. It was an "anti" party. Any movement which succeeds must be a movement based upon positive and constructive principles in an effort to do a work which the world needs to have done. Some Freemasons may have made mistakes; a few individual brethren may have earned some of the epithets which were hurled at them; but the fault did not lie in our Masonic principles.

Outstanding Features of the Movement.

One interesting fact in regard to the anti-Masonic movement is that it was almost entirely a rural movement. The strength of the Masons, on the other hand, was found chiefly in the cities. Another noteworthy fact is that the New England influence was predominant. Though strong in Pennsylvania, the chief strength of the party lay in the New England states, in New York, and such other localities as had received emigration from New England. Two of the most prominent leaders of the party, Thurlow Weed of New York and Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania, were of New England extraction.

Although many of the leading politicians of the time were in sympathy with the anti-Masons, the active leaders were a younger set of men, largely ambitious politicians and newspaper men, who thought they saw an opportunity to capitalize for their own purposes the

excitement growing out of the Morgan affair. They resorted to every possible device to secure publicity. Many newspapers were founded, there being 141 anti-Masonic papers in 1832. Not only was wide publicity given to the resolutions passed against Masonry in the state conventions, but the anti-Masons also introduced the custom of holding a national nominating convention for a similar purpose. They sent speakers into every possible district, many renouncing Masons being prominent among these. The favorite means used by these speakers to attract attention was to give a stirring account of how Morgan was put to death by the Masons, and there are many evidences to show that the story did not grow less imaginative in the telling.

Lessons to be Learned.

The anti-Masonic Party disappeared in the late thirties, and with the dying down of the political and religious fanaticism, it became possible again to do Masonic work. Once more candidates began to apply for initiation. Slowly but surely the Masonic institution revived and the brethren who had remained faithful received the reward of their courage.

As one considers the far-reaching effects of the Morgan excitement, he cannot help realizing how easy it is for a great Fraternity, founded upon enduring humanitarian principles, to become the object of villification and abuse. It will probably never be known for a certainty, whether Masons had anything at all to do with the final disappearance of William Morgan. But facts made little difference; there were the enemies of Freemasonry then as now, and one has but to read the story of this episode to see how quickly they seized upon the situation which gave them opportunity to strike a deadly blow at the prosperity of the Fraternity. Then, as now, the institution was judged by the char-

acter and conduct of the individual members. Whether Masons actually made away with Morgan or not, it is evident that there were brethren in that vicinity whose character was not in accord with true Masonic standards and whose conduct was not above reproach. Herein lies a very definite lesson for us in these days when thousands and hundreds of thousands of candidates are knocking at our doors.

The thinking Mason will also consider the possibility that a few members of the Fraternity, not content with orderly procedure, attempted to take the administration of law and order into their own hands, and may by surreptitious conspiracy, have planned to make away with a traitor. Misguided individuals, belonging to other organizations, have done the same many times; and so, whether they actually performed the deed, or were only the kind of men who might reasonably be suspected of such behavior, the result was the same, and the Fraternity which by every precept and teaching seeks to be the exponent of the Brotherhood of Man, became instead, in the eyes of the public, a satire of those principles.

Then again, one wonders what would be the result of a similar campaign against our Fraternity if it should be carried out today. Suppose, for example, that it were generally believed, or even suspected, that Freemasons in one part of the country or another, in one capacity or another, were attempting to take the administration of justice into their own hands. Suppose, further, that some powerful enemy of the Fraternity, for political reasons or otherwise, should decide that our membership of more than 2,500,000 constituted a menace to its desires or ambitions, and should take up the cudgels against us in an effort to mould public opinion in opposition to the principles which we believe and desire to see carried into practice in this great movement of ours. If that enemy were power-